Leaf Managemaet 2010

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Newsletter from the Dirt Doctor, Howard Garrett. My organic guru.

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Leaf Management Update 2010

This scene is one of the most dramatic examples of environmental thuggery in my neighborhood, but it is quite common everywhere, unfortunately. Here's my annual attempt to pass on some common sense. Having the leaves hauled off to the landfill increases taxes, wastes time and money, throws away valuable soil-building organic material and looks terrible.

Leaf Management No - Nos:
1. Leaves should never be raked, put in bags and sent to the landfill.
2. Leaves should never be raked, put into piles and set on fire.
3. Leaves should never be raked and put into the compost pile - except as a last resort.
4. Leaves should never be blown on to the neighbor?s property or into the streets.

Correct Leaf Management:
1. Leaves should be mowed and mulched into the turf. Using a mulching mower is best but not essential. Turf can take quite a volume of leaves before there is excess. Excess leaves would be when the lawn is about to be completely covered and smothered by the ground-up leaves.

2. At the point of excess, the leaves should still be mulched on the lawn or driveway, but raked, picked up and distributed as mulch in flower beds and vegetables gardens.

3. When no more mulch is needed in the flower and vegetable beds, the remaining

leaves that have been ground-up by the lawnmower can be put into the compost pile. Add **dry molasses** [3] to the beds and the compost pile to help the material break down and become humus more efficiently. Use it at about 20 lbs. per 1000 sq ft.

4. Never under any circumstances should the leaves be removed from the site. They should either be mulched or composted. All cities should outlaw the city service of picking up leaves and grass clippings. If home and business owners have to recycle the organic matter, then the landscapes are healthier, water runoff is reduced, and less tax money has to be allocated to picking up and managing leaves and other organic matter. Everybody wins!

If you have any questions about this newsletter or any other topic, join me this weekend for my Green Living and Dirt Doctor Radio shows [4].

Naturally yours,

Howard Garrett

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